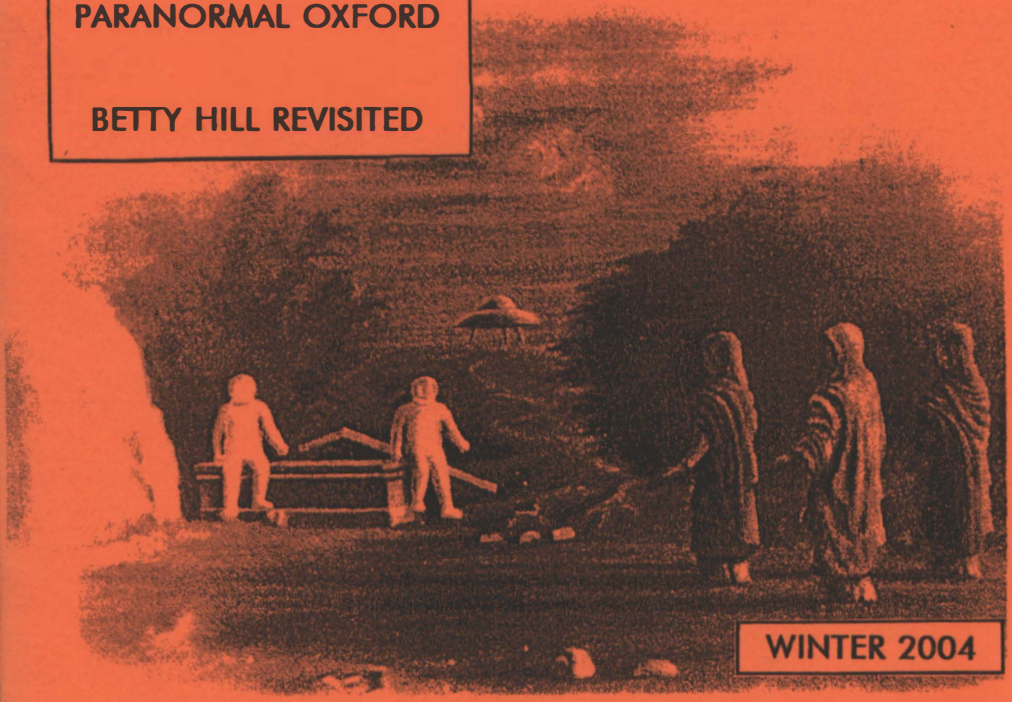
Awareness

CROP CIRCLES 2003

PARANORMAL OXFORD

BETTY HILL REVISITED



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Editorial Address & All Correspondence P.O Box 23, WHEATLEY, Oxon, OX33 1FL, England.

CONTENTS

	PAGES
Editorial/News In Brief	1-6
Sightings Reports - Data Research	7-10
Crop Circle Report 2003 - Geoff Ambler	11-15
Local Oxford Paranormal Nexus - Mike Soper	16-18
Betty Hill - Grandmother of Ufology - Avis Ruffu	19-23
UFOs/Kept Status of Humankind - Mike Soper	24-26
Astronomy Notes	26-27
From the Archives	28
Advertisements	28-29

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HOTLINE 01869 320989 E-MAIL fc@fcaccs.fsnet.co.uk

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EDITORIAL

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Our last edition went out just before the tragic news reached us that Graham Birdsall, the Editor of UFO Magazine and International Conference speaker, had died on September 19th after a sudden brain hemorrhage on the 11th. In spite of vain attempts to revive him including a 7 hour operation, Graham died of heart failure at the age of 49.

Readers may not be aware that Graham started out as a member and investigator for Contact Int. (UK) in the late 1970s. I have set out a review of his contributions to Ufology overleaf.

We also lost Gordon Creighton, best known as the former editor of Flying Saucer Review, in August. A former diplomat with extensive knowledge of China, Gordon spoke several languages and edited FSR for many years. Gordon had in fact reached the great age of 95 and had only recently passed on the FSR mantle, so he must have still been editing into his 90s!

Two great men gone - who can replace them?

Recently articles have arrived here and over the Internet mentioning names and feuds over UFO issues. As CIUFOR has no direct knowledge of the arguments involved, we won't publish details unless it affects our group. Every UFO organisation has periodic outbreaks of bickering usually over differences in emphasis and style. Where you have a range of persons getting together, all with searching minds and differing approaches to the subject and no "Holy Bible" which tells you what is right and what is wrong - disagreements are inevitable. Occasionally they get nasty!

We are fortunate to live at a time when free speech in Britain is universal. Over many periods of history utterings about "flying saucers" and "extraterrestrials" would be regarded as "heresies" and the proponents of them, "heretics". The poor unfortunates would be lead away, subjected to torture and probably execution in the most vile form.

Our UFO feuds are probably direct descendents of the religious persecutions of yesteryear. "Our way is right", (the only one), "God is on our side" type of nonsense which tended to result in the removal of the opposing parties. Whereas religion was all powerful and controlled the fabric of society in Britain until about 150 years ago, nowadays most areas of expression can be tolerated. The arrival of the Internet has progressed this concept above and beyond anything previously experienced to a point where unwholesome activities such as paedophilia have been able to manifest unchecked until recently. Yes of course, mountains of UFO material abound on the "Net" showing many wish to express themselves on the subject, but not be constrained by "rules" of being inside a group. Unfortunately now picking out the wheat from the chaff is now almost impossible.

Make the most of these times folks - they may only be a brief period in our history before darkness descends again -----

The number of UFO reports has fallen back to previous levels after the July/August heatwaves increased the number of people operating outside their homes by about a

thousand times normal! The period between August 1-4, 2003 looks to have been the most busy in UFO activity for many years. There has been extreme flaring on the Sun during late October and November - another possible activator for UFO sightings. In the first instance it seems to have brought much needed rainfall to many parts of Britain after 6 months of drought (not ruling out random weather patterns).

THE EDITOR

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NEWS IN BRIEF

GRAHAM BIRDSALL 1954-2003: - (Editor's Memories). The tragic loss of Graham Birdsall at the age of 49 has stunned the UFO world. From his early days as a mere investigator for Contact International to his final international status as editor of the only glossy magazine on our subject on public sale in the UK, "UFO Magazine", Graham showed the greatest drive and determination to succeed.

He first came to my attention in 1978 when he produced a special front-of-house display at a Leeds cinema which generated a large number of new members for the group. The film making its premiere was "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" - still arguably the finest UFO film ever made.

With this influx of members the Leeds area had the largest section of Contact (UK) personnel in the country. Graham with his brother Mark then created YUFOS, the Yorkshire UFO Society, affiliated to Contact International (UK), but after a year of rising tensions with Oxford headquarters, YUFOS became independent.

Throughout the 1980s, YUFOS directed by Graham increased in size and prestige producing its own magazine and holding larger and larger conferences. The Leeds conference became the landmark UFO event to go to annually and other venues such as Solihull also became popular.

Perhaps Graham's greatest achievement was to convert the YUFOS group journal to a full colour, bi-monthly, "UFO Magazine" which started in the mid-nineties and still runs today as a successful monthly. To get the likes of W.H Smith to regularly stock a product is in itself an achievement! At this stage Graham was able to give up his day job and become full time editor. With this increased prestige and marketing skills, Graham soon became a regular at UFO conferences throughout the world. His last appearance at Oxford was at the CIUFOR 1997 conference at Exeter Hall. The UFO Magazine was challenged by competitors who jumped on the "alien body" publicity bandwagon in 1996. When these fell by the wayside over the next 2 years, UFO Magazine continued to be the only specialised UFO journal in the UK market, being successful enough to go monthly in 2001.

In terms of research and objectivity, Graham was more controversial. I remember the disastrous Cracoe Fell, c1983 photographs, where a freak saucer shaped reflection caused by sunlight on wet gritstone rock high up on the hillside was claimed by YUFOS to be absolute proof of a UFO. Other groups of ufologists in the area violently disagreed and Contact eventually sent a team to Yorkshire to investigate independently. We were gobsmacked to see the same saucer shaped reflection exactly as seen on the photographs from a side road

in the village of Cracoe. Latterly Graham was a strong promotor of Doomsday scenarios and cosmic collisions and at the last conference I saw him at, he was presenting the "Millennium Bug" as a very serious problem, giving the delegates present a touch of the jitters.

Some of Graham's best research was on secret aircraft and aviation links to UFOs combining the 2 strong interests he had. He was recently involved with NASA "smoking gun" footage which showed fast moving UFOs? close to a long tether from a satellite.

Of course if you state that 95% of UFO sightings can be explained in mundane terms, then you are not likely to succeed in selling a magazine or conference. Graham was a master of marketing and presentation and had a very good platform presence. Maybe he attended too many long haul conferences and didn't look after himself.

Graham leaves a wife, Christine, and 3 daughters, Helen, Louise and Tracy. (CIUFOR sent a floral tribute to Graham's funeral for which £20 was taken from funds).

VIOLENT SOLAR STORM REPORTED: Extremely large sunspots were reported by astronomers during the last week of October 2003. These emitted great surges of electrified gas out into space, and some will have reached Earth. The solar flares were expected to have caused major interference with satellites, power systems and mobile phones, although after several weeks this does not seem to have been a problem. On November 4th the largest ever solar flare erupted on the Sun. This was rated as X28 magnitude way beyond the previous most powerful flare of X20.

Sightings of UFOs have been linked to the sunspot cycle and it may be interesting to see if more UFOs are reported in the next year.

POWER FAILURES LINK? Major power failures in the electrical grids of USA/Canada, London and latterly Italy have all occurred in the second half of 2003. This seems to be an excessive frequency judging from previous experience and the reasons for the failures look to be somewhat vague. The Italian collapse seems to have affected half the country and has been blamed on imported grid supplies from over the border in Switzerland. This was similar to the USA blaming the Canada end for their grid failure.

The possibility of terrorism seems to have been ruled out, but do we have external forces drawing power from these systems which cannot be explained away?

"A VERY BRITISH UFO HOAX": A very entertaining UFO programme went out on TV Channel 4 on October 7th, 2003. A team of top model makers and engineers were commissioned to build a convincing looking saucer type UFO in 12 weeks, which would then fly and be realistic enough to fool the public.

The trials and tribulations of building such a craft took up most of the programme and ended up with some very "Heath-Robinson" concepts. A suitable launch site was scouted out and a field close to the Avebury stone circles, Wilts, chosen, as it was suggested there would be lots of crop circle fans in the area. The actual date of the flight was not made public which seems odd. It looks to have been late August or early September as all the crop fields appeared to have been harvested. As the final crop circle of the year, in the Avebury area had appeared on August 10th it seems likely that the expected "croppies" may have been in short supply!

It was also not entirely clear how long the 25ft diameter saucer was airborne. There were tight limits on wind speeds set down by the CAA, and it looks to have been almost dusk before the wind was light enough to allow a take off. The craft, or rather powered balloon, was probably airborne for half an hour and passed over Avebury village and the local pub, before the ground controllers found their radio links could no longer steer the thing and it crash landed in a pasture field to the west of Avebury. The team were seen to recover the superstructure in almost total darkness.

Who had it fooled? It seems that Channel 4 had planted many reporters and cameramen around the pub at the appropriate time and took footage of gobsmacked drinkers within a few seconds of the craft passing over them. They also fed independent TV news channels around the globe using their own pictures. The overall impression was that the whole exercise was TV company driven and hardly an objective situation in reporting UFOs, as the witnesses did not act independently. Certainly CIUFOR had received no reports of this event until the programme was scheduled.

"X-RAY VISION" REALITY: The classic science fiction notion of aliens with superpower eyes that can see inside or through a body, is now becoming a reality. A special camera that secretly "undresses" members of the public to detect hidden weapons or explosives is shortly to be adapted by police and security services.

Known as the "Millimetre Wave Camera", it operates on different technology to the x-ray and metal detector machines now in use at airports. It omits no radiation of its own so is quite harmless to persons being scanned.

By the time this is read, the Metropolitan police will be using the device as far as can be ascertained. There are many ethical considerations to be looked at here and our press officer has already discussed some of these on local radio. Like "Viagra" which was supposed to be closely controlled and only available from doctors, supplies can readily be obtained over the Internet several years later. It seems likely therefore the "Millimetre Wave Camera" is only a step away from a Peeping Tom's paradise and will almost certainly get into the wrong hands.

COINCIDENCES - LATEST: The editor reports that on Sunday, November 23rd, 2003, he was looking to find a house in Wandsworth, London SW, where his son is living and called at the wrong address in a street of terraced houses before finding the right number. Three days later he was at the cinema seeing a silly comedy romp called "Love Actually" and noticed in a scene towards the end of the film, the Prime Minister of Britain *(played by Hugh Grant)* having fallen in love with his tealady *(Martine McCutcheon)* requested his chauffeur driven car to call on her on Christmas Eve. The location was a terraced house in Wandsworth SW, and, YES, he went to the wrong house to start with!

Please send your "coincidences" or "synchronicities" to the editorial address.

IUFOPRA DISBANDS: It is with regret we have received the following e-mail from our associate group, IUFOPRA, Dublin.

"Having spent the last 10 years as Director and Deputy of IUFOPRA, and researching and investigating the UFO/Paranormal phenomenon, it is with regret that we have decided to retire from both. Our decision has not been taken lightly - we had been thinking about it since August of this year - our reasons being that both of us are very heavily involved in other commitments; we both have sick relatives to look after and care for, and as many of you will be aware, I was the victim of a devastating flood which destroyed my house as well as a considerable amount of IUFOPRA files.

The trauma suffered by both of us in the aftermath of the flood took its toll on us and, as a result, we no longer have the enthusiasm, zest, and interest to keep running IUFOPRA. In fact it has made us realise that there is more to life than UFOs and the Paranormal, and none of us know just what is round the corner. LIFE IS PRECIOUS. We are happy with our decision and there is no going back.

One of the many things we enjoyed was exchanging data on a regular basis with our members and this is something we will miss. We have made many friends over the years and take this opportunity to thank every one for their friendship, kindness and support to us through good and bad times. We can all be proud of the fact that we've worked tirelessly over the years (sometimes with a lot of frustration) to bring credibility and respectability to the subject.

Finally we cannot close without mentioning one particular person who has played a very important role in IUFOPRA since she came on board five years ago - our PRO and very close friend, Kathy Crinion. Her valuable contribution to IUFOPRA over the years, as well as her friendship, support and guidance, through good times and bad, is something we will always treasure. Kathy has been a real pleasure to work with and a wonderful PRO. Although we have now retired, we consider ourselves very lucky to have Kathy as our friend, and we will be keeping in touch with each other. Also Kathy has indicated that she would like to keep the torch burning for IUFOPRA by wishing to remain in contact with our members. If you wish to contact her on any aspect of UFOlogy/Paranormal in Ireland you can do so at **kathycrinion@eircom.net**

We would like to wish everyone involved in UFOlogy, at home and abroad, success, peace, happiness and joy. Remember we've only one life and its precious.

With love, peace and gratitude." Anne Griffin and Pat Delaney.

NATIONAL SKYWATCH AT RENDLESHAM: A second major skywatch took place on the night of August 30-31st 2003, organised by Strange Phenomena Investigations. From several reports to hand, it appears a goodly number of people attended including Britain's leading sceptic, Professor Chris French. Watchers were taken to the spot in Rendlesham Forest where a UFO landing is said to have occurred at the end of 1980. Thereafter the various accounts indicate a fair number of "orbs" and strange mists turning up on digital cameras, but possibly no visible phenomena. It is likely that "orbs" will be picked up at almost any location and are not directly associated with Rendlesham. Overall the night looks to have been enjoyed by all present - but no outstanding breakthroughs.

AGONY CORNER: (Anti-establishment comment on latest scares and cover-ups).

"THE SILENT MENACE": It is now a well established fact that vast numbers of "silent" telephone calls are being received by group members. Up to 5 a day is not uncommon. Basically one answers the "phone" to be greeted by total silence and absolutely no clue as to who rang. The recall number, 1471, always states "number withheld".

Totally negative thoughts tend to go through the mind - the worst being that burglars are casing the joint checking to see if there is anybody at home before trying to break in! The old and infirm will no doubt feel this. Alternatively it could be your partner's secret lover, who hearing the wrong voice hangs up! We who have been involved with Ufology for many years can remember times when phones were supposedly "bugged" so we tended to think some sort of alien contact scenario was being played out. (In the "Mothman" incidents of 1966-7, many people across the eastern states of the USA received phone calls which were of incomprehensible buzzing and hissing sounds).

The national press have now revealed the likely explanation of the menace. Powerful computers are dialling random numbers - up to a hundred at a time - which are linked to call centres most probably based in India. Subject to the number of operatives on duty or talking on line, the call may or may not be attended to when the receiver is lifted. If a line is cleared there is a click after the silence and someone answers. Normal background chat is picked up as well. Needless to say all the calls relate to selling a product or market research and can be placed in the "junk mail" bracket.

This activity is equivalent to the silly kid who used to knock your front door and run away. In those days one occasionally pursued the rascal and give him a box round the ears. *(Nowadays you would be arrested for assault and no doubt end up in court!)* These international cowboys are almost impossible to trace and are committing the same offences as the juvenile door knocker of yesteryear. The massive advances in telecommunications technology over the past 20 years has opened up the floodgates to an incredible amount of fraud and hassle for which Joe Public is the main target and sufferer.

CONCERNING VIVISECTION (from Phillip Duckworth)
Hans Ruesch's "conspiracy" (exposé) that animal "research" means no research at all, as extrapolation from animal to man is utterly impossible. Vivisection should not exist and will be abolished by law. Ruesch's exposés will accelerate vivisections inevitable downfall. (Book available at £10 from P.O Box 240 49, London NW4 2ZR. *Copy with editor*).

McCARTHYISM RETURNING? (Late news) The attempted purge of communist sympathisers in the early 1950s over the USA by the extreme right wing Senator Joseph McCarthy is regarded as the most blatant example of paranoia from the Cold War period. Those pilloried by McCarthy including many famous actors and film stars were, in the main, entirely innocent, and the period must have resembled the Spanish Inquisition without the tortures!

We are now in 2004 seeing a paranoid America grounding Transatlantic flights on the pretext that passengers with dodgy names might be terrorists. All visitors other than from western nations are to be photographed and fingerprinted on entry to the USA. "Sky marshal's" will be on nearly every plane. Major security alerts are given out every few weeks - but nothing happens. How serious is this terrorist threat? How much is paranoia?

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SIGHTING REPORT

By Data Research

Date: **July 2003** **Country: UK**
Place: **Hanbury Worcestershire** **Time: n/known**

Credit: Linda Longbottom – newspaper The Standard, Friday August 15th 2003-12-05

Linda sent Contact a newspaper article which described glowing orbs that had been spotted in the night sky at the end of July 2003.

The report went as follows:
"Mr Tom Hines a BBC cameraman was looking for a location to shoot a private film in the area when he spotted the lights in the sky. He filmed what he could see and the eerie record of these three lights suspended in the air has now convinced CONTACT UFO Research to take the sightings seriously".

We were particularly interested in this case as we had had several reports of comparative sightings in the same location and Mike Soper had tried to follow up as many as possible cases around the area.

Date: **circa 1998/1999** **Country: UK**
Place: **Bromsgrove** **Time: 23.00hrs**

Ms LL returned her sighting which she thought may have been of interest to us.

She lives in Bromsgrove (4 miles from Hanbury) and worked at the local hospital at the time. She states "My friend and I were driving back from the hospital about 11pm along the Perryfields Road, when two iridescent lights appeared in my rear view mirror. Thinking them to be another vehicle I carried on.

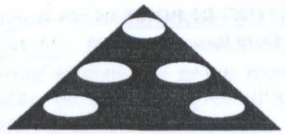
The lights were suddenly above my car, visible through the sun-roof, and then came over the bonnet of the car and disappeared. I immediately stopped my vehicle and my friend and I could not believe what we had seen. There was no noise, no aircraft in the sky and no other vehicles on the road.

The following day I contacted the local paper. They had received no other reports of any sightings. I contacted the local British telecom department to check if the above telephone cables where I had stopped could be responsible for the lights but they said not. I could not find a local UFO information department, so I put it down to an unexplained phenomenon."

Date: **Circa July/August 2003** **Country: UK**
Place: **High Wycombe, Buckingham** **Time:**

Mr & Mrs D. saw over the course of three weekends objects in the sky both day and night. Briefly during the day the objects appeared like a bright star, stationary, then moved then faded and then disappeared. One particular object appeared like a jellyfish, another like a faint beam being switched on and off.

At 11.30pm on 3rd August 2003 a triangular black craft flew over with no sound, approximate height of 200 ft with five domed lights on a triangular wing. As the craft approached there seemed to be about 10



lights but it was hard to distinguish them all due to the brightness. Prior to this night, several objects had been seen which had made manoeuvres circling clockwise or anti-clockwise overhead also weaving a zig-zag course.

Mr. D. became very concerned and reported the sighting to the Police and the MOD.

Mrs D. stated that before the incident on August 3rd there were a few other things in the sky, which her, her husband and brother had seen these were very small disc-like objects, sometimes 2 at a time, extremely high in the sky and all during the daylight hours. One actually appeared to have a beam shining from it at one point. Another circled around in a clockwise position and then suddenly went into an anti-clockwise position and then just disappeared into the sky. We saw these small discs on three consecutive weekends leading up to the final one on August 3rd when with her husband sat in their back garden looking up at all the stars and satellites crossing over the night sky suddenly this object appeared above the trees. It was not making a sound, it went straight over our heads and gained a bit of height and disappeared. We saw it briefly for a few seconds my husband being able to see it longer than myself. It appeared to be black in colour and triangular shaped.

Investigators Report:

Investigators Bill Foley and Geoff Ambler saw Mr & Mrs D at their home from 9.15-11.00pm on 9/8/03. Mr. D appeared severely traumatised by his final experience of a triangular UFO the previous Sunday and was reluctant to go outside into the garden where he had viewed it. He wrote up his report during the time we were there, but did not want to read our magazine or any other literature on the subject stating his experience was big enough to last a lifetime.

On the other hand Mrs D was very relaxed and friendly and willingly accompanied us outside where we skywatched for an hour or so. During the skywatch it was noted that many aeroplanes passed over and various satellites. Nothing unusual was seen on a starlit night (but quite misty). The area where the triangle was viewed was surrounded by trees so that only skybound objects above 45° could be seen.

Mr D. finally came outside to join us about 11pm. It was stated that D's youngest child of 3 a boy, was present as well but appeared not to notice anything as the triangle flew past. Thus we have 3 entirely different experiences.

Several night photographs were taken with flash to test for any invisi ble "residuals".

Date: **20th August 2003** **Country: UK**
Place: **Streatley on Thames, Berkshire** **Time: 05.40am**

This sighting came via the Internet and we thank "Joe McGonagle" for this.

Early morning the sky conditions were clear with light high cloud reflecting the rising sun, silhouetted the phenomena.

When the witness was looking out of the window at the sunrise he noticed an object completely change direction. The colour was black and the object moved around his field of vision making unbelievable manoeuvres changing direction multiple times including changes of altitude, it seemed to defy gravity and laws of momentum. This was also witnessed by the man's mother.

The witness viewed through his binoculars and stated it was "triangular in shape, shaped like an F117 stealth fighter only flatter, but with the same fin configuration and performing aerial acrobatics impossible for any man-made object could do. It remained in his field of vision changing direction and altitude, sometimes even hovering for around 5 minutes. There then appeared to be 2 identical objects, continuing the same behaviour. The most amazing thing happened at that point when there appeared from one of the objects a line of 6 smaller objects (shaped like the original craft) which appeared to curve away from their point of origin with streaks of light (although this could have been smoke/steam reflecting the light of the rising sun) streaking from behind them. Then all the objects vanished in the blink of an eye leaving nothing in the sky.

We did telephone the witness who reported the triangular UFO sighting and he said he arose early on 20th August to repair his computer and happened to see a black triangle UFO about 5 miles to east. He immediately awoke his mother who confirmed the sighting. All details taken from what was seen through his binoculars. If accurate the object was sighted over wooded area of South Oxon towards Henley on Thames. We felt this was a high calibre witness who is at the moment attending University.

Date: **14th August 2003** **Country: UK**
Place: **Witney, Oxfordshire** **Time: 23.35**

The witness, a Mrs P.O. saw a blue round shaped object described as fuzzy around the edges.

She states she went to bed around 11.30pm and was very restless, after discarding her pillow and settling more comfortably she looked across at the large window which she described as, 8ft wide by 4ft 6ins drop. From her vantage point she could see the top of the roof across the road. She lives in a maisonette in a quiet cul-de-sac.

It was a full moon and she could see aeroplanes flying past every now and again as she is within the vicinity of Brize Norton Air Base about 4 miles away. Whilst looking out she saw a bright and totally blue round tennis ball shaped object which flew effortless by as if on a pre-set course. By this she meant it did not move up and down or hover it just kept a steady course. She only saw it for 5-6 seconds but she said the colour was so striking as it glided from East to West. She could not see clear edges, they appeared to be "fuzzy" which struck her as odd.

She states it was not an aircraft as she is very familiar with night flying 'planes and this drew her attention because of its unfamiliarity.

Date: **2nd August 2003** **Country: UK**
Place: **Yardley, Birmingham** **Time: 15.30**

Mrs D.D. was listening to her story tape on her radio and just happened to glance out of her bedroom window to see a silver pencil shaped object suspended in the sky.

She states it did not appear to move as though it was suspended, she could see aircraft flying above the object clearly.

Through binoculars she could see flashing lights down its length. There was no noise and no vapour trail. It moved in an easterly direction towards Birmingham International Airport, then disappeared from view.

She rang the Met Office to see if it was one of their devices, but they have balloons and this definitely was not a balloon.

The object was silver in colour with flashing lights one after the other as in traffic light sequence.

Date: **2nd August 2003** **Country: UK**
Place: **Sheldon, Birmingham** **Time: 19.15**

Mr. KB was talking to his neighbour 2 ladies, when he saw an object which they all described as an elongated silver pendulum with a spherical device on top which appeared to be rotating.

The object was stationary for quite a while then seemed to shoot away in the distance finishing up as a dot in the night sky. The object seemed to re-appear again and continued in this action for 2-3 times.

Mr. KB went and got his binoculars, but was unable to focus them clearly on the object, he stated the object was very fuzzy through the lens, as if it was wobbling or it may have been an unstable rotation. The sighting lasted for 10 minutes and he said "we could clearly see the object with the naked eye".

The object travelled in a North Easterly direction and there was no sound.

The above two sightings from different areas of Birmingham will lend credence to its authenticity. The object being seen by more than one witness and backed up by others shows there certainly was some phenomenon that night.

Date: **14th October 2003** **Country: UK**
Place: **Probus, Cornwall** **Time: 21.00hrs**
Credit: **Dave Gillham CURFORG (Cornish UFO Research Group)**

On a fine starry evening the witness was driving along the A390 on the Probus bypass in the area of Denas Water. As his car approached the brow of the hill a brightly lit object appeared from the direction of Probus, crossed the road about 50 feet in front of his car and about 50 foot off the ground. The size of the object was 2 metres x 2 metres approximately shaped like a box with a small dome on top and brightly lit. The witness noticed that the box shaped object was translucent and he could see inside, there were roughly about 100 yellow lights glowing inside, the colour of the main object was a yellow orange, like flames. The direction of the object went to West Trelowthas,Great Trewirgie, Gare, Ruan Lanihome then on to the Falmouth area.
(Dave's address is 24 Carrine Road, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3XB if there are any more sightings in the area)

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SIGNS IN THE FIELDS - 24th YEAR, CROP CIRCLE REPORT 2003

by Geoff Ambler

The year 2003 was not a vintage one for crop circles in England, although this may have been due to the extreme heat of the summer creating a very early harvest. Thus the phenomenon suddenly stopped after August 10th, a full 3 weeks earlier than average, and at least a dozen formations short of the normal August tally. The writer's assessment was that there was 68 formations from April to August, which might be considered "genuine" from aerial photographs. About 12 more were eliminated as definite hoaxes or anecdotal reports. These account for only those on the main websites or local research.

MONTHLY DISTRIBUTIONS:	APRIL 3	JULY 31
	MAY 3	AUGUST 12
	JUNE 19	

The first event occurred on April 20th at Privett, West Meon, Hants - the county that always seems to get the first formation. This rape design was followed by others in Sussex and Wilts. In fact the phenomenon seemed to dominate in Sussex this year until mid-June when the main activity reverted to the usual hotspot area of Avebury, Wilts. Overall 35 formations were recorded in Wiltshire - about half the grand total as usual, and nearly all within 10 miles of Avebury with just a couple in the Stonehenge area. The strong activity in Sussex amounted to 10 of the formations, the second most prolific county. Hampshire appears to be in decline reporting only 5 formations during the season.

FORMATIONS BY COUNTY:	WILTS 35	SUSSEX 10	HANTS 5
	YORKS 4	KENT 3	OXON 3
	HERTS 2	SOMER' 2	DEVON 1
	WARKS 1	BEDS 1	ESSEX 1

Looking to find crop circles outside the above mentioned areas might be quite difficult although some of the best designs were found in Yorkshire and a fine pentagram type near Barton-le-Clay, Beds. Virtually all the formations reported were of the complex type - the odd single circle being a thing of the past.

Most researchers on the ground were disappointed that there was no "grand finale" as in the past 2 years when "alien" faces were pressed out into the crop and the massive 409 circles fractal formation arrived. At the beginning of August, there were signs that new technology might be gearing up as a design incorporating "swallows" showed up near Alton Barnes, Wilts. This in fact may have been in reply to the annual attempt at communication which this year was a binary message laid out on plastic sheet just a few fields away. On August 10th, a design consisting almost entirely of crescents both fully formed and outlined appeared at North Down near the A361 road and this proved to be the very last formation of 2003, although there was reported a very basic looking ring formation near Kendal, Cumbria in mid-September - too vague to consider genuine.

AUGUST 10th COP OUT? By the abrupt departure of crop circles in the UK, 2003, in the earliest harvest since 1990, we might be able to deduce a few things about the "circle makers". There had been formations virtually every day near Avebury for the previous week. During August in most seasons the decline is more gradual. The formation of crescents on North Down was on land farmed by Mr Shepherd who had been hostile to an earlier unique design in his fields which attracted a lot of attention. This time Shepherd decided to mutilate the formation after about a week of visitors - indicating he wasn't quite ready to harvest the whole field on the high ground. This indicates that there might have been 10 days or so left before cutting the later crops on high ground, but NO formations arrived.

Does this mean, the "circlemakers" had used up all their energy resources too soon in 2003 and could not produce the "grand finale" around August 15th. Or was the crop too wilted to make a good definition formation? Each crop where circles have landed - rape, barley and wheat is timed to work at its optimum state with wheat being the priority crop once the stems have formed from about mid-June onwards. Into July and August, almost all new formations are in wheat. If the late summer is wet and fields hang over into September, very few fresh circles appear in droopy, mouldy looking plants.

Why should crop circles have not appeared further north after August 10th 2003, where it had not been so hot? This never happened in this year or previously as the "circlemakers" appear to have specific territories and there may be geological reasons why the phenomenon hardly ever turns up even in rich arable counties such as Hereford/Worcester or Suffolk.

Overall one feels there may have been additional reasons for the sudden cessation of UK formations in 2003, which looks to have followed suit abroad as well. Is there some doubt as to the renewal in 2004 - unlikely after 24 years, but let's see.

HOAXING 2003: As far as can be ascertained there were no major hoax attempts this year - I.E those that are paid for by newspapers to trip up the genuine researchers and usually worked by a group called "Team Satan". The overview of hoaxing is that it will usually occur within a short distance of genuine formations. Where there is something on the ground, the urge to copycat becomes irresistable!

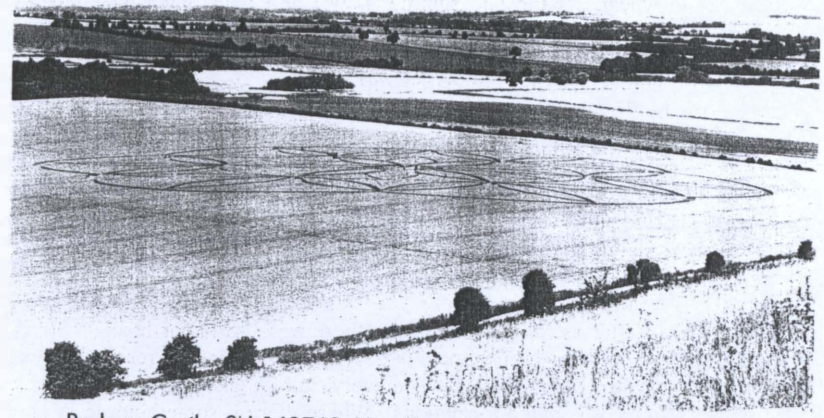
Inspecting aerial photographs of events mainly around Avebury, it was noted nearly all the handsome formations were 200-250ft diameter; yet there appeared a couple of weedy looking attempts of less than half this size with very ragged features. Into July there occurred 3 times identical quadruplet formations in a "T" shape at locations not more than 2 miles apart. All looked to have easy access from roads. A CIUFOR inspection of one of these revealed poor ground layering and no response to dowsing rods. Genuine formations are quite often miles from the nearest road - an early June event this year, over 500ft long, found high on the downs near Ogbourne St George, Wilts, took 40 minutes on foot to reach with no vehicular access possible.

After August 10th the momentum was lost and the hoaxes stopped at the same time as the real thing!

FIELD VISITS: The only location in recent years to stand a chance of seeing several formations and meet fellow "croppies" has been at Avebury/Silbury Hill/Alton Barnes. A late June quick visit on a Sunday afternoon only revealed a few formations in green crops in the distance over at Windmill Hill. The only formation close to a road was on Waden Hill overlooking Avebury village and stone circles. This field had been the site of many notorious hoaxes in previous years, but the formation that arrived on June 21st looked particularly good in the first aerial photographs, showing yin-yang signs and 15 variable sized circles on "stalks". When we arrived we found the kindly farmer, it is assumed, had mown out a wide path to make it easy to reach the formation from the road into Avebury. However it was not much use as the formation had been gutted in about 2 weeks from 1000s of visitors trampling all over it. None of the delicate design features seen in the aerial photographs could be made out.

At the end of July there were about 15 formations to see, but only a few were positioned to give reasonable ground views. We managed to get a good view of a huge "petal" formation

from the high ground at Barbury Castle hill fort, scene of many prominent formations over the years. This arrived on July 28th and we visited when only 2 days old and fresh. The scale of this might be appreciated from the photographs below.



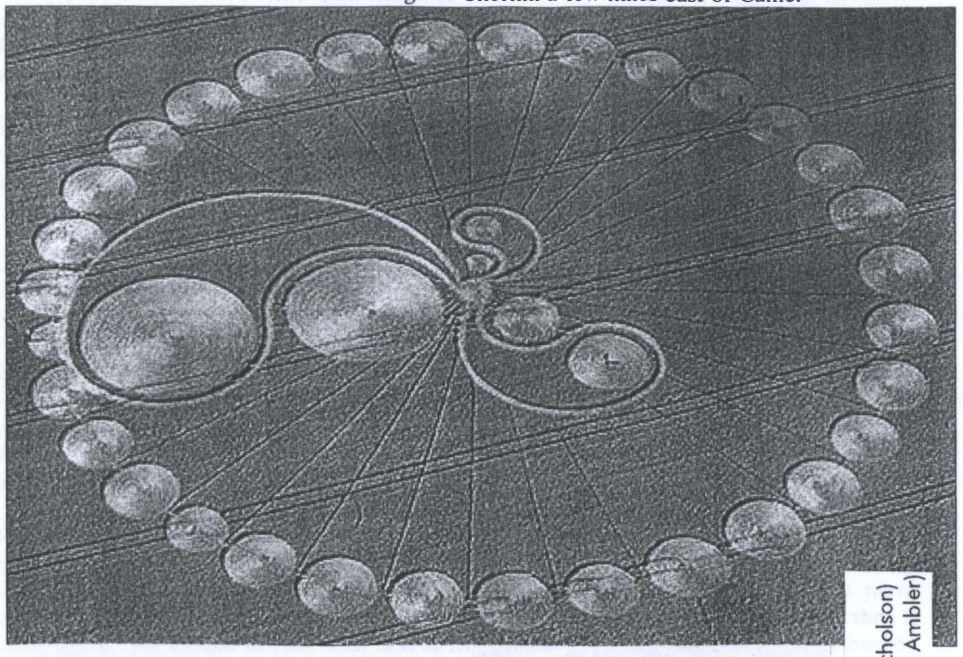
Barbury Castle, SU 163768, View from high ground, Formed 28/7/03
(Photos: Geoff Ambler)

Inside formation. Note vast scale and sharp edges.

A little closer to Avebury we had a good look at a very fine formation below the Hackpen Hill White Horse (arrived 20/7). Yin-yang symbolism was again strong in this one. (See photographs overleaf).

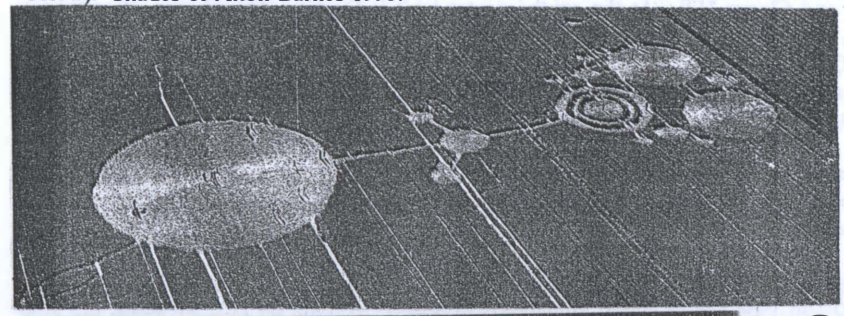
We noted a very strong contingent of middle-aged American ladies visiting all the formations with great enthusiasm, showing the worldwide appeal of the subject. At the end of the tour

we retired to the Barge Inn which serves a tasty snack or two and is right on the banks of the Kennet and Avon canal, a mile from Alton Barnes. A wall of the snooker room at the back of the pub is given over to crop circle information. There is also the new "Crop Circle Cafe" found on the A4 route at the village of Cherhill a few miles east of Calne.

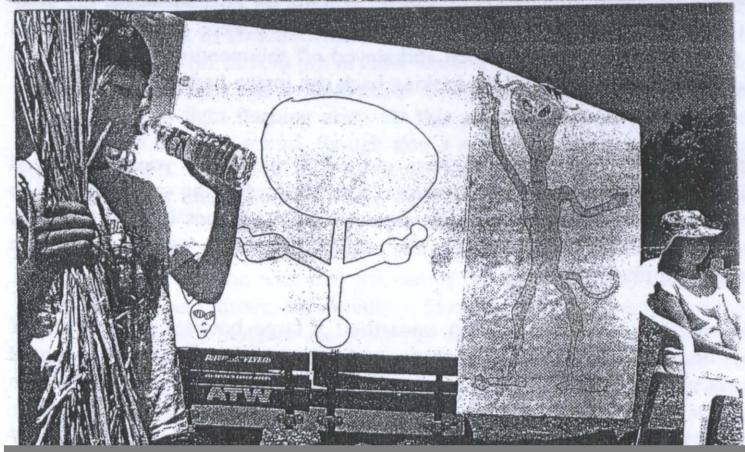


/7/03, SU 123747
to: Ex Nexus, N. Nicholson)
n Hill. (Photo: Geoff Ambler)

considered hoaxes. A report from Drogheda, Ireland, has just been seen and others have come from Belgium, Italy (14), Switzerland, Poland (4) and France. In the USA possibly their biggest formation to date was reported from Rockville, California in late June. In arguably the wackiest place on Earth, thousands of visitors arrived soaking up the energies, some wearing strange aluminium caps, others starting up impromptu businesses selling T-shirts, coffee and bottled water. Other businesses hidden away in the country were "discovered" and have to thank the "circlemakers" for their good fortune. (See photographs below). Shades of Alton Barnes 1990!



Rockville, California, Formation
After 1000s of visitors!



Nine year old entrepreneur sells bottled water
at circle site. (Ex Daily Republic, Fairfield CA, 6/7/03)

FOOTNOTE: Viewing crop circles is best done from the air. Aircraft flying at 2000 ft are fine but getting decent photos difficult. I tried a hot air balloon trip in late August, which gave superb views of crop fields, photos no problem, but the cost is high (£125 per person); the balloon can only fly in still conditions (trip postponed 5 times); and the pilot can only steer in the direction of the wind and lands where he can.

CONCLUSIONS: The year 2003 produced no additional clues as to the nature of the phenomenon. This is a long haul project and those who stay the distance will be ultimately rewarded!

Thanks to Websites: **www.cropcircleconnector.com** **www.cropcircleresearch.com** **www.swirlednews.com** **Oxford Circles: www.partyvibe.com/archaic/crop/index.html**

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